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Inclusion Service

Specialist Teaching Service The Role of the Specialist Teacher and Higher Level Teaching Assistant in Early Years Settings



(Updated Sept 19) Directorate for Education and Children's Services

WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF THE SPECIALIST TEACHER AND HIGHER LEVEL TEACHING ASSISTANT ?

Who are Specialist Teachers?

Specialist Teachers are qualified teachers who have additional qualifications, expertise or experience in teaching babies, toddlers and children with a range of special educational needs and disabilities.

Where do Specialist Teachers work?

Specialist Teachers support private, voluntary, independent and maintained early years setting eligible to offer the 2/3/4 year old funded entitlement.

What is the Role of the Specialist Teacher?

The role of the Specialist Teacher varies depending on the needs of the babies, toddlers or children and the settings they are working with. The role of the Specialist Teacher can include:

Liaison:

- with health care professionals, such as Health Visitors, Paediatricians, Therapists etc.
- with parents/carers and practitioners in early years settings
- with other professionals such as Portage Home Visitors, Social Workers, Educational Psychologists, Special Educational Needs and Disability Officers etc.

Assessment:

- of children's development and learning in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage
- and identification of needs, outcomes and provision for children and young people as part of the statutory Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment process (EHCNA)

Advice:

- to parents, carers and families to enable them to understand the nature of their child's special educational needs and/or disability and understand how to support all aspects of their child's development and learning, at home and in the community.

- to leaders, managers and practitioners in early years settings to enable them to understand the nature and impact of a child's special educational needs or disability and consider how to modify and adapt their environment, the activities and learning opportunities on offer in their setting.
- to leaders and managers in early years settings in relation to accessibility, health and safety considerations etc. they may need to address

Teaching

- babies, toddlers and children at home or in early years settings
- practitioners in early years settings. Modelling strategies and approaches to enable them to effectively support individual babies, toddlers and children

Teaching babies, toddlers and children will cover a range of different areas depending on each baby's, toddler's or child's unique needs, strengths and interests and may include areas such as:

- early communication
- interaction
- physical development
- play skills

Specialist Teachers are supported in their role by Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA) who may sometimes be asked to undertake some direct work in settings to support practitioners. The work of the Higher Level Teaching Assistants may include:

- modelling and developing strategies, routines, resources that all staff may use as part of a consistent approach to meeting needs.
- using the Assessment, Tracking and Target Setting Tool to accurately monitor progress in small steps.
- incorporating professional advice into everyday practice.
- role swap in support of the SENCO/ key person.
- advice and support on how to 'assess, plan, do, review', observe, evaluate and analyse with specific things in mind and then identify appropriate next steps.

This is not an exhaustive list and Specialist Teachers and HLTAs will be involved to a greater or lesser extent in some aspects of the role depending on the age group that they work with and the settings that they work in.